



**HOUSE OF COMMONS**

LONDON SW1A 0AA

13<sup>th</sup> May 2021

*Dear Confront,*

**RE: REFORM OF DRUGS POLICY.**

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of your concerns regarding drug use in the UK and for making me aware of this campaign.

I do appreciate that you and I have different views on this issue, and I acknowledge that there are a range of different approaches to drugs policy - but regardless of my own views, I will certainly relay your concerns to Ministers during the discussions I have. What is clear to me, however, is that there is scientific and medical evidence showing that drugs are harmful to health and society.

Cannabis, for example, can unquestionably cause harm to individuals and society. Legalisation of cannabis would not eliminate the crime committed by the illicit trade, nor would it address the harms associated with drug dependence and the misery that this can cause to families. Despite the potential opportunity offered by legalisation to raise revenue through taxation, there would be costs in relation to administrative, compliance and law enforcement activities, as well as the wider costs of providing drug prevention and health services.

I welcome the fact that the Government keeps drug control under constant review and considers new evidence of misuse and harm alongside advice from independent experts at the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs.

The Government's approach on drugs remains clear and it is one which I support; drug use must be prevented in our communities, help should be provided to dependent individuals, while law enforcement must protect society by stopping the supply, and we must tackle the organised crime that is associated with the drugs trade.

As you mention, Dame Carole Black was appointed to lead an independent review into the use and supply of illicit drugs, seeking views on how to reduce harm to individuals and society. This review is an essential step towards tackling drug addiction, and I am committed to ensuring that we build upon her work. By adopting a more holistic, long-term approach, victims of the illegal drug industry will be able to access the right support services. The Government is already responding to the first phase of Dame Carol Black's findings, with further investment to significantly increase the law enforcement response to county lines and the recruitment of 20,000 extra police officers, which is of course very welcome.



I am aware that the second phase of this major independent review, which focuses on the provision of treatment and recovery services for drug users, as well as considering how to prevent the misuse of drugs among adults and young people, is currently underway. These findings will feed into the wider Government strategy to tackle the harm caused by substance misuse. Moreover, a cross-Government addiction strategy will be published this year and rest assured that I will continue to monitor these developments closely and relay your views appropriately.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

*With best wishes,*  
*Tom*

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP  
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT  
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**